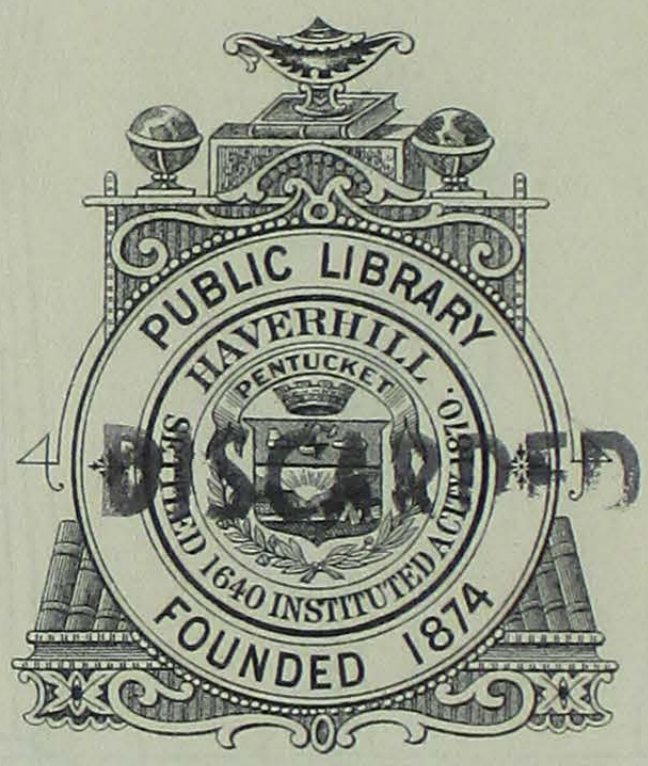


Bachelor Belles

Harrison Fisher

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Bachelor Belles

December 25, 1908



Bachelor Belles

With Illustrations by
Harrison Fisher

Decorations by
Theodore B. Hapgood



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CONTENTS

THE MESSAGE *Thomas Heywood*

LOVES SHE LIKE ME *Anonymous*

AN INVITATION *Théophile Gautier*

LOVE DISPOSED OF . . . *Robert Traillspence Lowell*

MY AMAZON *Eric Mackay*

DISDAIN *Davison's Poetical Rhapsody*

DA CAPO *H. C. Bunner*

From "Poems" of H. C. Bunner

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A CERTAIN YOUNG LADY *Washington Irving*

THE GOLDEN FISH *George Arnold*

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WHY, LOVELY CHARMER *Anonymous*

AVICE *Austin Dobson*

YOUTH *Austin Dobson*

SONG *William Cullen Bryant*

Courtesy of D. Appleton & Company

SUNLIGHT *Arthur O'Shaughnessy*

A Woman's Shortcomings . *Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

Oh, Mistress Mine *William Shakespeare*

Infirm *E. S. Martin*
From "A Little Brother of the Rich and Other Verses"
Copyright, 1890, by Charles Scribner's Sons

My Sweetheart's Faults *Harry B. Smith*
Courtesy of the Author

I Will Not Let Thee Go *Robert Bridges*

Rosette *Béranger*

A Contradiction *Clement Scott*

If You Want a Kiss *Anonymous*

The Mistaken Moth . . . *Translated from Wegener*

In Explanation *Anonymous*

Swimming Song *Theodore Wratislaw*

In a Rose Garden *John Bennett*
Courtesy of the Author

The White Flag *John Hay*
By special permission of Houghton Mifflin Company

In the Wood *Herbert E. Clarke*
From "Love's Demesne"

If— *Robert, Lord Lytton*

WHEN I SAW YOU LAST *Austin Dobson*

INDECISION *Anonymous*

A HEALTH *Edward Coate Pinkney*

A SONG *Norman R. Gale*

WHEN I LOVED YOU *Thomas Moore*

TO CELIA *E. H. Lacon Watson*

THE QUARREL *Thomas Moore*

LITTLE GIRLY-GIRL *James Whitcomb Riley*
Courtesy of The Bobbs-Merrill Company

MAID MARION *Louise Chandler Moulton*
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NOTE

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THE MESSAGE

YE little birds that sit and sing
Amidst the shady valleys,
And see how Phillis sweetly walks
Within her garden alleys;
Go, pretty birds, about her bower
Sing, pretty birds, she may not lower.
Ah me! Methinks I see her frown!
Ye pretty wantons, warble.

Go tell her through your chirping
bills,
As you by me are bidden,
To her is only known my love,
Which from the world is hidden.

Go, pretty birds, and tell her so,
See that your notes strain not too
low,
For still methinks I see her frown!
Ye pretty wantons, warble.

Go tune your voices' harmony
And sing, I am her lover;
Strain loud and sweet, that every
note
With sweet content may move her;
And she that hath the sweetest voice
Tell her I will not change my choice.
Yet still methinks I see her frown!
Ye pretty wantons, warble.

Oh fly! make haste! see, see, she
falls
Into a pretty slumber!
Sing round about her rosy bed
That waking she may wonder.
Say to her 'tis her lover true
That sendeth love to you, to you!
And when you hear her kind reply,
Return with pleasant warblings.


Harrison Fisher
1908

LOVES SHE LIKE ME?

OH say, my fluttering heart,
Loves she like me?
Is hers its counterpart,
Throbs it like thee?
Does she remember yet
The spot where first we met,
Which I shall ne'er forget?
Loves she like me?

Soft echoes still repeat,
"Loves she like me?"
When on that mossy seat,
Beneath the tree,
I wake my amorous lay,
While lambkins round me play,
And whispering zephyrs say,
"Loves she like me?"

On her I think by day,
Loves she like me?
With her in dreams I stray
O'er mead and lea.
My hopes of earthly bliss
Are all comprised in this,
To share her nuptial kiss—
Loves she like me?

Does absence give her pain?
Loves she like me?
And does she thus arraign
Fortune's decree?
Does she my name repeat?
Will she with rapture greet
The hour that sees us meet?
Loves she like me?

LOVE DISPOSED OF

HERE goes Love! Now cut him
clear,
A weight about his neck.
If he linger longer here,
Our ship will be a wreck.
Overboard! Overboard!
Down let him go!
In the deep he may sleep
Where the corals grow.

He said he'd woo the gentle breeze,
A bright tear in her eye;
But she was false or hard to please,
Or he has told a lie.
Overboard! Overboard!
Down in the sea
He may find a truer mind,
Where the mermaids be.

He sang us many a merry song
While the breeze was kind;
But he has been lamenting long
The falseness of the wind.
Overboard! Overboard!
Under the wave
Let him sing where smooth shells ring
In the ocean's cave.

He may struggle, he may weep,
We'll be stern and cold;
His grief will find, within the deep,
More tears than can be told.
He has gone overboard!
We will float on;
We shall find a truer wind
Now that he is gone.

AN INVITATION

TELL me, pretty one, where will you
sail?
How shall our bark be steered, I pray?
Breezes flutter each silken veil,
Tell me where will you go to-day?

My vessel's helm is of ivory white,
Her bulwarks glisten with jewels bright
And red gold;
The sails are made of the wings of a dove,
And the man at the wheel is the god of
love,
Blithe and bold.

Where shall we sail? 'Mid the Baltic's
foam?
Or over the broad Pacific roam?
Don't refuse!



Say, shall we gather the sweet snow-
flowers,
Or wander in rose-strewn Eastern
bowers?
Only choose.

"Oh, carry me then," cried the fair
coquette,
"To the land where I've never journeyed
yet,
To that shore
Where love is lasting and change
unknown,
And a man is faithful to one alone
Evermore."

Go, seek that land for a year and a day,
At the end of the time you 'll be still far
away,
Pretty maid.
'T is a country unlettered in map or in
chart,
'T is a country that does not exist, sweet-
heart,
I'm afraid!

MY AMAZON

MY Love is a lady fair and free,
A lady fair from over the sea,
And she hath eyes that pierce my
breast
And rob my spirit of peace and rest.

A youthful warrior, warm and
young,
She takes me prisoner with her
tongue;
Aye! and she keeps me—on
parole—
Till paid the ransom of my soul.

I swear the foeman, armed for war
From cap-à-pie, with many a scar,
More mercy finds for prostrate foe
Than she who deals me never a
blow.

And so 't will be, this many a day;
She comes to wound, if not to slay.
But in my dreams—in honeyed
sleep—
'T is I to smile and she to weep.

DISDAIN

AT her fair hands how have I grace
entreated
With prayers oft repeated!
Yet still my love is thwarted:
Heart, let her go, for she'll not be
converted.
Say, shall she go?
Oh no, no, no, no, no!
She is most fair, though she be
marble hearted.

How often have my sighs declared
my anguish,
Wherein I daily languish!
Yet still she doth procure it.
Heart, let her go, for I cannot
endure it.



Say, shall she go?
Oh no, no, no, no, no!
She gave the wound, and she alone
must cure it.

But shall I still a true affection owe
her,
Which prayers, sighs, tears shall
show her,
And shall she still disdain me?
Heart, let her go, if they no grace
can gain me.
Say, shall she go?
Oh no, no, no, no, no!
She made me hers and hers she will
retain me.

But if the love that hath and still
doth burn me
No love at length return me,
Out of my thoughts I'll set her.
Heart, let her go, O heart I pray thee
let her!
Say, shall she go?
Oh no, no, no, no, no!
Fixed in the heart, how can the
heart forget her?

DA CAPO

SHORT and sweet, and we've come
to the end of it—
Our poor little love lying cold.
Shall no sonnet, then, ever be penned
of it?
Nor the joys and the pains of it told?

How fair was its face in the morning,
How close its caresses at noon,
How its evening grew chill without
warning
Unpleasantly soon!

I can't say just how we began it—
In a blush, or a smile, or a sigh;
Fate took but a moment to plan it;
It needs but a moment to die.

Yet remember that first conversation,
When the flowers you had dropped
at your feet
I restored. The familiar quotation
Was "Sweets to the sweet."

Oh, then delicate perfume has
haunted
My senses a whole season through;
If there was one soft charm that you
wanted
The violets lent it to you.

I whispered you life was but lonely—
A cue which you graciously took;
And your eyes learned a look for
me only—
A very nice look.

And sometimes your hand would
touch my hand,
With a sweetly particular touch;
You said many things in a sigh, and
Made a look express wondrously
much.

We smiled for the mere sake of
smiling,
And laughed for no reason but fun;
Irrational joys, but beguiling—
And all that is done!

We were idle, and played for a
moment
At a game that now neither will
press;



I cared not to find out what "No"
meant;
Nor your lips to grow yielding with
"Yes."

Love is done with and dead; if
there lingers
A faint and indefinite ghost,
It is laid with this kiss on your
fingers—
A jest at the most.

'Tis a commonplace, stale situation,
Now the curtain comes down from
above
On the end of our little flirtation—
A travesty romance for Love,

If he climbed in disguise to your
lattice,
Fell dead of the first kisses' pain:
But one thing is left us now—
that is,
Begin it again.

A CERTAIN YOUNG LADY

THERE'S a certain young lady,
Who 's just in her heyday,
And full of all mischief, I ween.
So teasing! so pleasing!
Capricious! delicious!
And you know very well whom
I mean.

With an eye dark as night,
Yet than noonday more bright,
Was ever a black eye so keen?
It can thrill with a glance,
With a beam can entrance,
And you know very well whom
I mean.

With a stately step — such as
You 'd expect in a duchess —
And a brow might distinguish a queen,
With a mighty proud air,
That says "touch me who dare,"
And you know very well whom
I mean.

With a toss of the head
That strikes one quite dead,
But a smile to revive one again;
That toss so appalling!
That smile so enthralling!
And you know very well whom
I mean.

Confound her! devil take her!
A cruel heart-breaker —
But hold! see that smile so serene.
God love her! God bless her!
May nothing distress her!
You know very well whom
I mean.

Heaven help the adorer
Who happens to bore her,
The lover who awakens her spleen;
But too blest for a sinner
Is he who shall win her,
And you know very well whom
I mean.



THE GOLDEN FISH

LOVE is a little golden fish,
Wondrous shy—ah, wondrous shy!
You may catch him if you wish;
He might make a dainty dish.
But I—
Ah, I've other fish to fry.

For when I try to snare this prize
Earnestly and patiently,
All my skill the rogue defies
Lurking safe in Aimée's eyes.
Lo, you see,
I am caught, and Love goes free.

WHY, LOVELY CHARMER

WHY, lovely charmer, tell me why
So very kind, and yet so shy?
Why does that cold, forbidding air
Give damps of sorrow and despair,
Or why that smile my soul subdue
And kindle up my flames anew?

In vain you strive with all your art
By turns to fire and freeze my heart,
When I behold a face so fair,
So sweet a look, so soft an air,
My ravished soul is charmed all o'er,
I cannot love thee less or more.

AVICE

THOUGH the voice of modern
schools
Has demurred,
By the dreamy Asian creed
'Tis averred,
That the souls of men, released
From their bodies when deceased,
Sometimes enter in a beast—
Or a bird.

I have watched you long, Avice—
Watched you so,
I have found your secret out;
And I know
That the restless ribboned things,
Where your slope of shoulder springs,
Are but undeveloped wings,
That will grow.

When you enter in a room,
It is stirred
With the wayward, flashing flight
Of a bird;
And you speak—and bring with
you—
Leaf and sun-ray, bud and blue,
And the wind-breath and the dew,
At a word.

When you called to me my name,
Then again
When I heard your single cry
In the lane,
All the sound was as the "sweet"
Which the birds to birds repeat
In their thank-song to the heat
After rain.

You have just their eager, quick
Airs de tête,
All their flush and fever heat
When elate;
Every bird-like nod and beck,
And a bird's own curve of neck
When she gives a little peck
To her mate.

When you left me, only now,
In that furred,
Puffed, and feathered Polish dress,
I was spurred
Just to catch you, O my sweet,
By the bodice trim and neat—
Just to feel your heart a-beat
Like a bird.



Yet alas! Love's light you deign
But to wear
As the dew upon your plumes,
And you care
Not a whit for rest or bush;
But the leaves, the lyric gush,
And the wing-power, and the rush
Of the air.

So I dare not woo you, sweet,
For a day,
Lest I lose you in a flash,
As I may;
Did I tell you tender things
You would shake your sudden
wings—
You would start from him who sings,
And away.

YOUTH

WHEN spring comes laughing
By vale and hill,
By wind-flower walking
And daffodil,—
Sing stars of morning,
Sing morning skies,
Sing blue of speedwell,—
And my Love's eyes.

When comes the summer
Full-leaved and strong,
And gay birds gossip
The orchard long,—
Sing hid, sweet honey
That no bee sips;
Sing red, red roses,—
And my Love's lips.



When autumn scatters
The leaves again,
And piled sheaves bury
The broad-wheeled wain,—
Sing flutes of harvest
Where men rejoice;
Sing rounds of reapers,—
And my Love's voice.

But when comes winter
With hail and storm,
And red fire roaring
And ingle warm,—
Sing first sad going
Of friends that part;
Then sing glad meeting,—
And my Love's heart.

SONG

DOST thou idly ask to hear
At what gentle seasons
Nymphs relent, when lovers near
Press the tenderest reasons?
Ah, they give their faith too oft
To the careless wooer;
Maidens' hearts are always soft—
Would that men's were truer!

Woo the fair one when around
Early birds are singing;
When o'er all the fragrant ground,
Early herbs are springing;
When the brookside, bank, and grove,
All with blossoms laden,
Shine with beauty, breathe of love,
Woo the timid maiden.

Woo her when, with rosy blush,
Summer eve is sinking;
When on rills that softly gush,
Stars are softly winking;
When, through boughs that knit the
bower,
Moonlight gleams are stealing;
Woo her till the gentle hour
Wakes a gentler feeling.

Woo her when autumnal dyes
Tinge the woody mountain;
When the dropping foliage lies
In the weedy fountain;
Let the scene that tells how fast
Youth is passing over,
Warn her, ere her bloom is past,
To secure her lover.

Woo her when the north winds call
At the lattice nightly;
When within the cheerful hall
Blaze the fagots brightly;
While the wintry tempest round
Sweeps the landscape hoary,
Sweeter in her ears shall sound
Love's delightful story.

SUNLIGHT

O heart full of song in the sweet
song-weather,
A voice fills each bower, a wing
shakes each tree,
Come forth, O winged singer, on
song's fairest feather,
And make a sweet fame of my love
and of me.

Songs shall not cease of the hills
and the heather;
Songs shall not fail of the land and
the sea:
But, O heart, if you sing not while
we are together,
What man shall remember my love
or me?

Some million of summers hath been
and not known her,
Hath known and forgotten loves less
fair than she;
But one summer knew her, and grew
glad to own her,
And made her its flower, and gave
her to me.

And she and I loving, on earth seem
to sever
Some part of the great blue from
heaven each day:
I know that the heaven and the earth
are forever,
But that which we take shall with us
pass away.

And that which she gives me shall
be for no lover
In any new love-time, the world's
lasting while;
The world, when it loses, shall never
recover
The gold of her hair nor the sun of
her smile.

And she and I loving, are king of
one summer
And queen of one summer to gather
and glean:
The world is for us what no fair
future comer
Shall find it or dream it could ever
have been.



Then, fall on us, dead leaves of our
dear roses,
And ruins of summer fall on us ere-
long,
And hide us away where our dead
year reposes;
Let all that we leave in the world
be—a song.

And, O song that I sing now while
we are together,
Go, sing to some new year of women
and men,
How I and she loved in the long
loving weather,
And ask if they love on as we two
loved then.

A WOMAN'S SHORTCOMINGS

SHE has laughed as softly as if she
sighed,
She has counted six and over,
Of a purse well filled, and a heart
well tried—
Oh, each a worthy lover!
They "give her time" for her soul
must slip
Where the world has set the
grooving:
She will lie to none with her fair,
red lip,
But love seeks truer loving.

She trembles her fan in a sweetness
dumb,
As her thoughts were beyond
recalling;
With a glance for one, and a glance
for some
From her eyelids rising and falling;
Speaks common words with a blushful
air,
Hears bold words unreproving:
But her silence says—what she never
will swear,
And love seeks better loving.

Go, lady! lean to the night guitar
And drop a smile on the bringer,
Then smile as sweetly when he is
far,
At the voice of an indoor singer!
Bask tenderly beneath tender eyes;
Glance lightly on their removing,
And join new vows to old
perjuries —
But dare not call it loving!



Unless you can think, when the song
is done,
No other is soft in the rhythm;
Unless you can feel when left by
One
That all men else go with him;
Unless you can feel when unpraised
by his breath,
That your beauty itself wants proving,
Unless you can swear "For life, for
death!"
Oh, fear to call it loving!

Unless you can muse in a crowd all
day
On the absent face that fixed you;
Unless you can love, as the angels
may,
With the breadth of heaven betwixt
you;
Unless you can dream that his faith
is fast
Through behooving and unbehooving;
Unless you can die when the dream
is past—
Oh, never call it loving!

O MISTRESS MINE

O MISTRESS mine, where are you
roaming?
O, stay and hear; your true love's
coming,
That can sing both high and low:
Trip no further, pretty sweeting;
Journeys end in lovers meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What 's to come is still unsure:
In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,
Youth 's a stuff will not endure.

INFIRM

"I WILL not go," he said, "for well
I know her eyes' insidious spell,
And how unspeakably he feels
Who takes no pleasure in his meals.
I know a one-idea'd man
Should undergo the social ban,
And if she once my purpose melts
I know I'll think of nothing else.

"I care not though her teeth are pearls—
The town is full of nicer girls!
I care not though her lips are red—
It does not do to lose one's head!
I'll give her leisure to discover,
For once, how little I think of her;
And then how will she feel?" cried he—
And took his hat and went to see.

MY SWEETHEART'S FAULTS

MY sweetheart has her faults in
plenty,
Which I perceive with much
distress;
For instance, she is only twenty,
And one would think her even less;
While I may mention it between us
(Excuse the confidence betrayed),
Her form is plagiarised from Venus,
And no acknowledgment is made.



Her hair is much too fine and curly;
Her lips are merely Cupid's bow;
Her teeth absurdly white and pearly;
But still we all have faults, you
know.
So, spite of this and spite of that,
Whate'er betide, whate'er befall,
These things let others cavil at;
I love my sweetheart, faults and all.

From such defects this little lady
Of mine is anything but free.
Her lashes are "extremely shady,"
Her eyes are "much too deep for
me."

Two dimples have been thought
too many
For one small maiden to possess.
Her rivals wish she had n't any;
But what 's a dimple, more or less?

Her voice attracts o'ermuch
attention
Because of its melodious ring.
Her foot — but that I shall not
mention —
It 's such a very little thing.
Yes, spite of that and spite of this,
Whate'er betide, whate'er befall,
Though others may perfection miss,
I love my sweetheart, faults and all.

I WILL NOT
LET THEE GO

I WILL not let thee go.
Ends all our month-long
love in this?
Can it be summed up so,
Quit in a single kiss?
I will not let thee go.

I will not let thee go.
If thy words' breath could
scare thy deeds,
As the soft south can blow
And toss the feathered seeds,
Then might I let thee go.

I will not let thee go.
Had not the great sun seen,
I might;
Or were he reckoned slow
To bring the false to light,
Then might I let thee go.

I will not let thee go.
The stars that crowd the
summer skies
Have watched us so below
With all their million eyes,
I dare not let thee go.

I will not let thee go.
Have we not chid the
changeful moon,
Now rising late, and now
Because she set too soon,
And shall I let thee go?

I will not let thee go.
Have not the young flowers
been content,
Plucked ere their buds could blow,
To seal our sacrament?
I cannot let thee go.



I will not let thee go.
I hold thee by too many bands:
Thou sayest farewell, and lo!
I have thee by the hands,
And will not let thee go.

ROSETTE

YES! I know you're very fair;
And the rose bloom of your cheek,
And the gold crown of your hair,
Seem of tender love to speak.
But to me they speak in vain,
I am growing old, my pet—
Ah, if I could love you now
As I used to love Rosette!

In your carriage every day
I can see you bow and smile;
Lovers your least word obey,
Mistress you of every wile.
She was poor, and went on foot,
Badly drest, you know—and yet—
Ah, if I could love you now
As I used to love Rosette!

You are clever, and well known
For your wit so quick and free;
Now Rosette, I blush to own,
Scarcely knew her A. B. C.
But she had a potent charm
In my youth—ah, vain regret!
If I could but love you now
As I used to love Rosette.

A CONTRADICTION

THEY say she's like an April day,
All sun and shower, grave and gay,
Just half in love and half in play,
Like other misses.
Go to! They tell a pack of lies;
For I have heard her heart-drawn sighs,
And I have seen her inmost eyes,
And felt her kisses.

They think her laugh is overbold,
And hint her smiles are bought for gold;
Dull heretics have thought her cold,
As is the fashion.

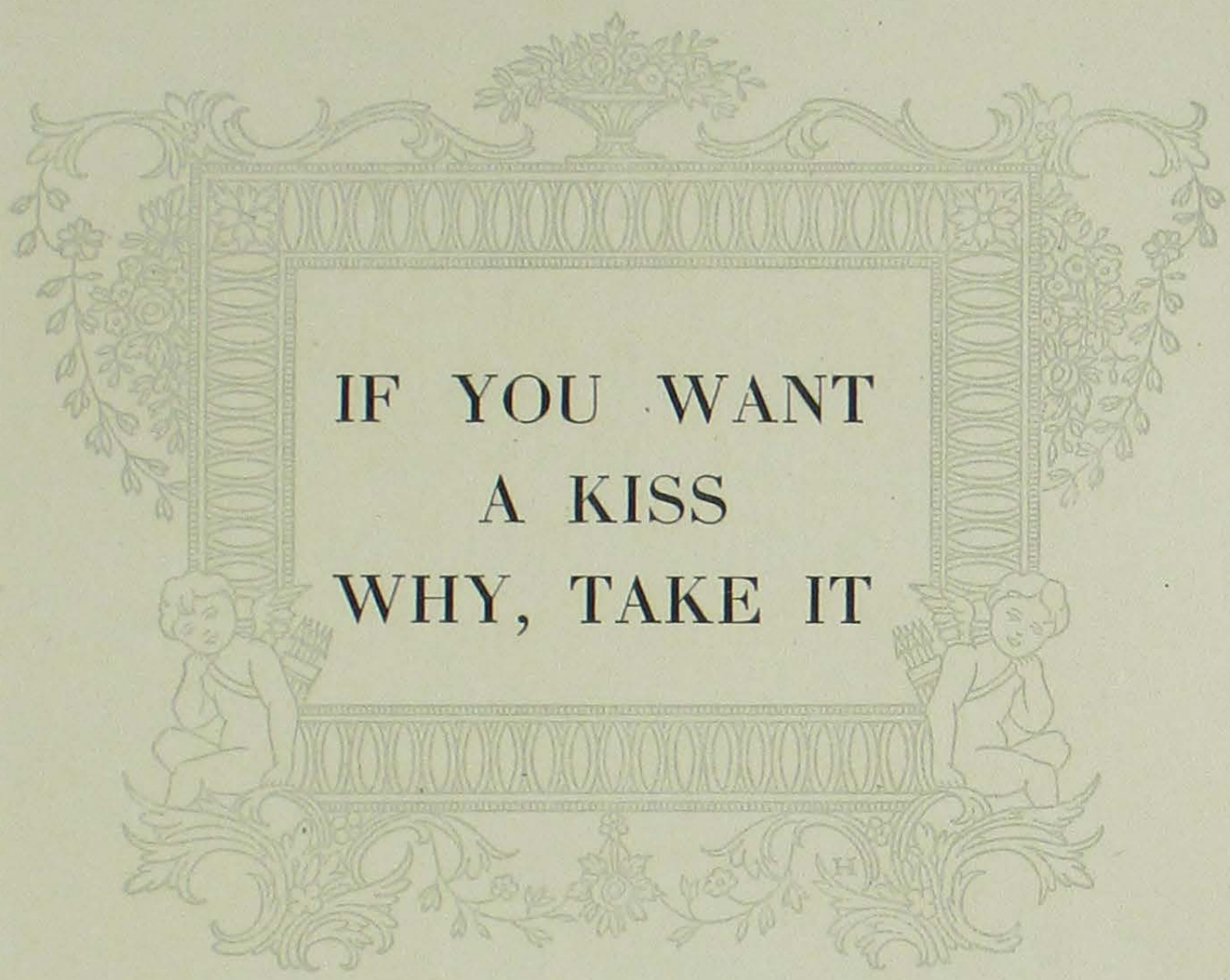


Ah me! when we together stole
Across the weald to leafy Knole,
'Twas there she showed to me her
soul
And all her passion!

They vow her life is tossed about
From ball to picnic, play to rout;
A careless butterfly, no doubt,
That scandal crushes.
What could we answer, if 'twere
said
That Time and Fate two lovers led
To lily-streams at Maidenhead,
Among the rushes?

Her reputation shivered most
Last night at supper, when our host
Made her of careless lips the toast
And reigning goddess.
But I, who know my love, dare say
She thought of home, and tried to
pray
Before her handmaid slipped away
Her satin bodice.

Your silly worldlings all forget
Her depth of hidden life, and bet
They've never met her equal yet
In fact or fiction.
But I, who love in secret, sit
Unweaving webs that Fate has knit
To bind me to so exquisite
A contradiction.


IF YOU WANT
A KISS
WHY, TAKE IT

THERE'S a jolly Saxon proverb
That is pretty much like this—
That a man is half in heaven
If he has a woman's kiss.
There is danger in delaying,
For the sweetness may forsake it;
So I tell you, bashful lover,
If you want a kiss, why, take it.

Never let another fellow
Steal a march on you in this;
Never let a laughing maiden
See you spoiling for a kiss.
There's a royal road to kissing,
And the jolly ones who make it
Have a motto that is winning—
If you want a kiss, why, take it.

Any fool can face a cannon,
Anybody wear a crown,
But a man must win a woman
If he'd have her for his own.
Would you have the golden apple,
You must find the tree and shake it;
If the thing is worth the having
And you want a kiss, why, take it.

Who would burn upon a desert
With a forest smiling by?
Who would change his sunny summer
For a bleak and wintry sky?
Oh, I tell you there is magic,
And you cannot, cannot break it;
For the sweetest part of loving
Is to want a kiss, and take it.

THE MISTAKEN MOTH

'Mid the summer flush of roses
Red and white,
Sat a damsel fair, a very
Pretty sight;
Till a butterfly, so smart,
With a flutter and a dart,
Kissed her mouth and made her start
In a fright.

"Ah, forgive me!" begged the insect,
"If you please;
I assure you that I didn't
Mean to tease.
I but took your rosebud lip
For the rose wherein I dip,
All its honey sweet to sip
At mine ease."



Said the beauty to the moth,
"You may try
To excuse your forward conduct,
Sir, but I
Wish it clearly understood
That such roses are too good
To be kissed by every rude
Butterfly!"

IN EXPLANATION

HER lips were so near
That—what else could I do?
You'll be angry, I fear,
But her lips were so near—
Well—I can't make it clear,
Or explain it to you,
But—her lips were so near
That—what else could I do?

A SWIMMING SONG

THE broad green rollers lift and
glide
Beneath our hearts as, side by side,
We breast them blithely, blithely
swim
Toward the far horizon's rim.

O far blue heaven above our head,
O near green sea about us spread,
What joy so full, since time began,
Could earth, our mother, give to
man?

Your bright face through the water
peers
And laughs. "What need have men
for tears?"
We say. The land is far and dim,
The world is summer's, and we
swim.

Out yonder! where our distant
home
Beckons us from the crests of foam!
Out yonder through the roller's
mirth!
What part was ever ours with earth?

Your white limbs flash, your red
lips gleam:
Love seems life's best and holiest
dream;
Nought comes between us here, and I
Could wish not otherwise to die.

With sea beneath us, heaven above,
Life holds but laughter, joy, and
love;
No trammels bind us now, and we
Are freer than the birds are free.



Your face seems sweeter here; your
hair,
Wet from the sea's salt lips, more
fair;
Your limbs that move and gleam and
shine,
Hellenic, pagan, half divine.

Ah, sweet! God's gift is good
enough,
God's gift of freedom, life, and love—
Though but for this brief hour are we
Alone upon the eternal sea.

THE WHITE FLAG

I SENT my love two roses — one
As white as driven snow,
And one a blushing royal red,
A flaming Jacqueminot.

I meant to touch and test my fate;
That night I should divine,
The moment I should see my love,
If her true heart were mine.

For if she holds me dear, I said,
She 'll wear my blushing rose;
If not, she 'll wear my cold Lamarque,
As white as winter's snows.



My heart sank when I met her; sure
I had been overbold,
For on her breast my pale rose lay
In virgin whiteness cold.

Yet with low words she greeted me,
With smiles divinely tender;
Upon her cheek the red rose
dawned—
The white rose meant surrender.

IN A ROSE GARDEN

A HUNDRED years from now,
dear heart,
We will not care at all.
It will not matter then a whit,
The honey or the gall.
The summer days that we have
known
Will all forgotten be and flown;
The garden will be overgrown
Where now the roses fall.

A hundred years from now, dear
heart,
We will not mind the pain.
The throbbing crimson tide of life
Will not have left a stain.

The song we sing together, dear,
The dream we dream together here,
Will mean no more than means a
tear
Amid a summer rain.

A hundred years from now, dear
heart,
The grief will all be o'er;
The sea of care will surge in vain
Upon a careless shore.
These glasses we turn down to-day
Here at the parting of the way:
We will be wineless then as they,
And will not mind it more.

A hundred years from now, dear
heart,
We'll neither know nor care
What came of all life's bitterness
Or followed love's despair.
Then fill the glasses up again
And kiss me through the rose-leaf
rain;
We'll build one castle more in Spain,
And dream one more dream there.

IN THE WOOD

THROUGH laughing leaves the
sunlight comes,
Turning the green to gold;
The bee about the heather hums,
And the morning air is cold
Here on the breezy woodland side,
Where we two ride.

Through laughing leaves on golden
hair
The sunlight glances down,
And makes a halo round her there,
And crowns her with a crown
Queen of the sunrise and the sun,
As we ride on.

The wanton wind has kissed her
face,
His lips have left a rose—
He found her cheek so sweet a place
For kisses, I suppose,
He thought he'd leave a sign, that so
Others might know.

The path grows narrower as we ride,
The green boughs close above,
And overhead, and either side,
The wild birds sing of Love.
But ah, she is not listening
To what they sing,

Till I take up the wild bird's song
And word by word unfold
Its meaning as we ride along!
And when my tale is told,
I turn my eyes to hers again—
And then—and then—

The bridle path more narrow grows,
The leaves shut out the sun;
Where the wind's lips left their one
rose
My own leave more than one,
While the leaves murmur up above
And laugh for love.



This was the place:—you see the
sky
Now 'twixt the branches bare;
About the path the dead leaves lie
And songless is the air.
All 's changed since then, for that,
you know,
Was long ago.

Let us ride on! the wind is cold.
Let us ride on — ride fast!
'T is winter, and we know of old
That love could never last
Without the summer and the sun!
Let us ride on!

IF—

So you but love me, be it
your own way,
In your own time, no sooner
than you will,
No warmer than you would
from day to day,
But love me still!

Each day that still you love me
seems to me
A little fairer than the day
before;
For, daily given, love's least
must daily be
A little more.

And be my most gain'd your
least given, if such
Your sweet will be! I reckon
not the cost,
Nor count the gain, by little
or by much,
Or least or most.

So you but love me, tho' your
love be cold,
Mine it can chill not. Tho' your
love come late,
Mine for its coming, by sweet
dreams foretold,
Will dreaming wait.

Yet ah, if some fair chance,
before I die,
One hour of waking life might
let me live,
Rich with the dream'd-of dear
reality
'T is yours to give!

Your whole sweet self, with your
sweet self's whole love!
Those eyes of fire and dew, those
lips wish-haunted,
Those feet whose steps like elfin
music move
Thro' worlds enchanted!



Your whole sweet self, that till
by love reveal'd
Even to yourself still half unknown
must be!
For of the wealth in souls like
yours conceal'd
Love keeps the key.

Ah, if your whole sweet self, by
all the power
Of your sweet self's whole love
in some divine
Far distant hour made wholly yours,
that hour
Made wholly mine,

And if in that blest hour all dreams
came true,
All doubts dissolved, all fears were
whirl'd away
In one wild storm of tendernesses
new
As time's first day,

What should we both be? Hush!
I do not dare
Even to hear my own heart's
whisper utter'd.
Be its sole answerer the silent air
This sigh has flutter'd!

WHEN I SAW YOU LAST ROSE

WHEN I saw you last, Rose,
You were only so high;
How fast the time goes!

Like a bud ere it blows,
You just peeped at the sky,
When I saw you last, Rose!

Now your petals unclose,
Now your May-time is nigh;
How fast the time goes!

And a life—how it grows!
You were scarcely so shy,
When I saw you last, Rose!

In your bosom it shows
There's a guest on the sly;
How fast the time goes!

Is it Cupid? Who knows!
Yet you used not to sigh,
When I saw you last, Rose;
How fast the time goes!

INDECISION

Do I love her?
 Dimpling red lips at me pouting,
 Dimpling shoulders at me
 flouting;
No, I don't!

Do I love her?
 'Prisoned in those crystal eyes
 Purity forever lies;
Yes, I do!

Do I love her?
 Little, wild and wilful fiction,
 Teasing, torturing contradiction;
No, I don't!



Do I love her?
With kind acts and sweet words
she
Aids and comforts poverty;
Yes, I do!

Do I love her?
Quick she puts her cuirass on,
Stabs with laughter, stings with
scorn;
No, I don't!

Do I love her?
No! Then to my arms she flies,
Filling me with glad surprise;
Ah, yes I do!

A HEALTH

I FILL this cup to one made up
Of loveliness alone,
A woman, of her gentle sex
The seeming paragon;
To whom the better elements
And kindly stars have given
A form so fair, that, like the air,
'Tis less of earth than heaven.

Her every tone is music's own,
Like those of morning birds,
And something more than melody
Dwells ever in her words;
The coinage of her heart are they,
And from her lips each flows,
As one may see the burdened bee
Forth issue from the rose.

Affections are as thoughts to her,
The measures of her hours;
Her feelings have the fragrancy,
The freshness of young flowers;
And lovely passions, changing oft,
So fill her, she appears
The image of themselves by turns—
The idol of past years!

Of her bright face one glance will
trace
A picture on the brain,
And of her voice in echoing hearts
A sound must long remain;
But memory, such as mine of her,
So very much endears,
When death is nigh my latest sigh
Will not be life's, but hers.

I fill this cup to one made up
Of loveliness alone,
A woman, of her gentle sex
The seeming paragon.
Her health! and would on earth
there stood
Some more of such a frame,
That life might be all poetry,
And weariness a name.


Harrison
1902

A SONG

I WILL not say my true love's eyes
Outshine the noblest star;
But in their depth of lustre lies
My peace, my truce, my war.

I will not say upon her neck
Is white to shame the snow;
For if her bosom hath a speck
I would not have it go.

My love is as a woman sweet,
And as a woman white;
Who's more than this is more than
meet
For me and my delight.

WHEN I LOVED YOU

WHEN I loved you, I can't but
allow
I had many an exquisite minute;
But the scorn that I feel for you now
Hath even more luxury in it!

Thus, whether we're on or we're
off,
Some witchery seems to await you;
To love you is pleasant enough,
And oh, 'tis delicious to hate you!

TO CELIA

(Who refuses to be drawn into an argument)

DEAR, if you carelessly agree,
With that so irritating air,
To every word that falls from me;
Dear, if you care

To drive a lover to despair
With bland "Oh, yes" and "Ah,
I see"—
Why, do it, if you like—so there!

It vindicates my theory
No woman's wise as well as fair;
And yet—how clever you can be,
Dear, if you care!

THE QUARREL

ALAS, how slight a cause may
move
Dissension between hearts that love;
Hearts that the world in vain had
tried,
And sorrow but more closely tied.

That stood the storm when waves
were rough,
Yet in a sunny hour fell off;
Like ships that have gone down at
sea
When heaven was all tranquillity.



A something light as air, a look,
A word unkind, or wrongly taken,
Oh! love that tempests never shook,
A breath or touch like this hath
shaken.

And ruder words will soon rush in
To spread the breach that words
begin,
And eyes forget the gentle ray
They wore in courtship's sunny day,

And voices lose the tone that shed
A tenderness round all they said;
Till fast declining, one by one
The sweetnesses of love are gone.

And hearts so lately mingled seem
Like broken clouds, or like the
stream
That smiling left the mountain's
brow
As though its waters ne'er would
sever,
Yet ere it reached the plain below
Breaks into floods that part forever.

LITTLE GIRLY-GIRL

LITTLE Girly-girl, of you
Still forever I am dreaming.
Laughing eyes of limpid blue,
Tresses glimmering and gleaming
Like glad waters running over
Shelving shadows rimmed with
clover,
Trembling where the eddies whirl,
Gurgling, "Little Girly-Girl!"

For your name it came to me
Down the brink of brooks that
brought it
Out of Paradise—and we—
Love and I—we, leaning, caught it

From the ripples romping nigh us,
And the bubbles bumping by us
Over shoals of pebbled pearl,
Lilting, "Little Girly-Girl!"

That was long and long ago,
But, in memory, the tender
Winds of summer weather blow
And the roses burst in splendour;
And the meadows' grassy billows
Break in blossoms round the willows,
Where the currents curve and curl,
Calling, "Little Girly-Girl."

MAID MARION

LITTLE Maid Marion, Rose in June,
What breath of prophecy comes
and goes,
And stirs your heart like a vagrant
tune,
Till the deepening bloom on your
soft cheek glows,

And your blue eyes shine like the
morning sky
Just alight with the morning star—
Hopeful and happy, sweet and shy,
While day and its glare are yet
afar?



Have you heard a name that we do
not hear
And set it to music all your own?
Has there come to you in a vision,
dear,
A face that only your eyes have
known?

Or is it still but a wandering voice
That whispers you something vague
and sweet,
Of days of wooing and days of
choice
And hearts that meet as the waters
meet?

Days that will come to you, Rose
in June,
Days that will test you and try you
and show
The sacredest meaning, the secretest
tune
Of all that your maidenly heart can
know.

They will leave you not as they find
you, dear—
The morning star gives place to the
sun;
But your blue eyes meet me, faithful
and clear,
I can trust your soul when the dream
is done.



